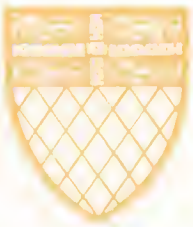
Cambridge in Pictures

CLARE



TRINITY HALL

CAMBRIDGE IN PICTURES

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'A symphony in grey and green' was how someone once described Cambridge, having in mind the ancient stone of its colleges, the trim grass of its lawned courts and public open spaces.

But when spring arrives and turns to summer, when summer in its turn mellows into autumn—then Cambridge wears more than grey and green. In spring daffodils and other flowers carpet the famous Backs—short for 'backs of the colleges' **1**. In autumn the russet leaves of the fading year are reflected in the waters of the Cam and Granta—that self-same stream which changes its name as it meanders on its 'slow sullen course' through the city. At the spot where it is seen here **2** it is known as the Cam, flowing under Victoria Bridge, past Jesus Green on the right, with boathouses in the background.

It was this river which made Cambridge an important town long before the University began. Along its length came supplies and goods from the surrounding countryside and from the Continent too, through the port of King's Lynn. Cambridge—the Roman Camboritum, the Saxon Grantebrigge—was early traversed by one of the great roads from London and early possessed a bridge which provided a means of communication between the Eastern Counties and the Midlands. And it had a fair, Stourbridge Fair, which became famous all over Europe.

No one knows exactly how the University began. Cambridge gradually became a centre of learning attracting students who were taught by any master who could collect a few scholars around him. The students entered at fourteen or earlier in those days.

The university (a corporation of teachers) preceded the colleges, which were founded as places of board and lodging for both the teachers and the taught. The first Cambridge college was Peterhouse, founded in 1284 by Hugh de Balsham, Bishop of Ely.

1 2

Among the sights of Cambridge which must not be missed are the bridges which span the river by the Backs, those picturesque banks of the Cam. These structures look their best on a hot, bright day, when the sun seems to bleach the stonework, making it if not 'whiter than white' then at least whiter than grey. A cloudless blue sky and the drooping featheriness of green willows enhances the curving beauty of these bridges connecting shady paths with green lawns. To linger on them in summer and gaze as the punts drift by is a thoroughly delightful way of spending a few soothing minutes. The rat-race pace of modern life seems far away. Mostly they are of stone, like Clare Bridge **3**, built in 1640 by Thomas Grumbold, master mason. Considered by many to be the most beautiful of Cambridge's bridges it gives those who cross it a splendid view of the Backs.

Pleasant to look upon, too, is Trinity College Bridge **5**. Like Clare, it is a three-arch construction, built in 1765 by James Essex—'the ingenious Mr Essex', his contemporaries called him. Cambridge born, bred and buried (his grave is in St Botolph's churchyard), Essex was the last of the great Renaissance School of architects inaugurated by Inigo Jones and Wren. Essex was also the builder of the predecessor of the last of the trio of bridges pictured here, Garret Hostel Bridge **4**. His structure of wood collapsed in 1812, and was replaced in 1837 by the present iron bridge. At the time of this rebuilding the authorities of neighbouring Trinity Hall enclosed the slipway between the college and the bridge, which so enraged the townspeople that in revenge they smashed off every one of the spear-heads on the iron railings of the new structure.

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At Corpus Christi College, founded in 1352 by the two town guilds of Corpus Christi and the Blessed Virgin, the architecture of the Middle Ages and that of the nineteenth century exists side by side. The Old Court **6** is the first closed quadrangle to have been built in Cambridge and, despite alterations, still gives a good idea of what a medieval college looked like. The New Court **7** was designed by William Wilkins and built between 1823 and 1827. Wilkins, who had built Downing College at Cambridge in the Grecian style, had become a devotee of Gothic by the time he came to design this New Court at Corpus. A change from the frequent stone of the Cambridge scene is the half-timber of the sixteenth-century Long Gallery of the President's Lodge at Queens' **8**. A picturesque feature of this most picturesque of Cambridge colleges is the Mathematical Bridge, so called because of the special calculations which went into the designing of it **9**.

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Best-known of all Cambridge buildings, is King's College Chapel built between 1446 and 1515. Seen from the Backs **10**, the edifice soars in pinnacled splendour towards a cloud-flecked sky. On the right it is flanked by the Gibbs Building, designed by James Gibbs and put up in 1824. This elegant piece of architecture combines with the Chapel to provide from the Backs one of the most celebrated views in the whole of Britain.

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King's Chapel has a perfect grandeur, as the view of it on the left **11** clearly indicates. Taken from the direction of King's Parade the photograph also shows the pinnacled gateway which is the main entrance to the college. This and the stone screen are much later than the Chapel, for they were built by William Wilkins between 1824 and 1828. Of the Chapel the seventeenth-century historian Thomas Fuller quaintly but rightly said that it 'is one of the rarest fabricks in Christendom'. The singing of King's famous choir—some of its members are seen above **12**—is well-known to millions through carol service broadcasts each Christmas Eve.

11

The interior of King's College Chapel **13**, 289 feet long, 40 feet wide and 80 feet high is superb. It is renowned for exquisite carvings, remarkable screens, magnificent choir stalls and some of the finest stained glass in the country.

Some of the best views of the fine buildings of Cambridge are to be seen from the river, such as this one of Clare College **14**, the University's second oldest foundation, dating from 1326. The building pictured here was erected in the first half of the seventeenth century and at one time had battlements. Nothing remains of the original buildings. Dr Caius, founder of Gonville and Caius (pronounced 'Keys') College built this Gate of Honour **15**. It is one of three imposing gateways, the Gate of Virtue and the Gate of Humility being the other two, erected to symbolise the passage of the student on the path to knowledge and learning. Dr Caius founded the college in 1557.

On King's Parade **16** is the Senate House, the centre of the University ceremonial and legislative activities. The Senate House designed by James Gibbs and completed in 1730, is said to be his finest creation. King's Parade is where town meets gown at Cambridge. The imposing tower **17** belongs to Great St Mary's, the University Church, which dates from the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, and is among the finest city churches. The Great Court of Trinity **18** has the distinction of being the largest of any of the courts of the colleges at either Cambridge or Oxford. It was created by Thomas Nevile, after he became Master in 1539, and was previously covered by the buildings of three other establishments, King's Hall, Michaelhouse, and Physwick Hostel. Trinity College, founded by Henry VIII in 1546, is generally agreed to have the most impressive architecture of any Cambridge college.

Famed for its exquisite proportions is the Wren Library at Trinity **19**. Its dignity is illustrated in this photograph. The windows are built so as to provide light for, but in no way interfere with, the bookcases. The library houses many treasures among its reputed 90,000 volumes and 2000 manuscripts, including the manuscripts of Milton's *Lycidas* and *Comus*, and a first draft of *Paradise Lost*.

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Trinity Library has three enormous doorways on the side facing the river **20**. The other side the building is open-arched and sealed to match the old ranges of the famed Nevile's Court at Trinity **21**. This Court still has the original cloisters with their stone columns in bays of four separated by a broader pier. Nevile started to build his new Court soon after the completion of the Great Court at Trinity and he lived to see it completed in 1615. He paid for it himself. The cloisters were extended in 1676–81. The Court has an unusual elegance for building of this period, and there can be no doubt that Sir Christopher Wren's sympathetic treatment of his library to close the open west end of the Court was a stroke of genius. Note the exquisite ironwork of the lamp in the foreground.

The best known of the Cambridge bridges is the Bridge of Sighs **22** at St John's College, which spans the river by a single arch. The five windows above the arch are unglazed, but they are secured by iron bars to prevent undergraduates gaining access from the river after the college gates have been closed at night. The Bridge of Sighs connects the Third Court at St John's College with the New Court built across the river in the nineteenth century. St John's College was founded in 1511 by Lady Margaret Beaufort, mother of Henry VII, and its large gateway is much photographed. Architecturally it is not among the most admired of the Cambridge colleges, although its architecture gives a representative picture of building throughout the centuries. There is an interesting Second Court built 1598–1602. The poet William Wordsworth was an undergraduate at St. John's.

One of the delightful things about Cambridge is the harmony between its mellow buildings and the landscape. Occasionally something may jar a little, and there are those who think that the St John's College Chapel **23**, the tower of which is seen in the river view, comes into this category. It was

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built in the middle of last century. A certainty for a delightful outing is to take a punt on the river **24**. Visitors will appreciate the creation of spaciousness by the planners of bygone ages, and the successful attempt by man to enhance the natural beauty of the river. In the background are the New Buildings of St John's, with the structure irreverently known as 'The Wedding Cake' standing out against the skyline.

24

The New Building (1670–80) of Magdalene College **25** is perhaps better known as the Pepys Library. Pepys gave £60 towards building it. It is the Second Court of this college where the famous diarist was a scholar. His books were transferred to it in 1724 and are now among its treasures which also include a pocket book of Francis Drake. Pepys arms are to be found above the middle window of the library. He bequeathed more than 3000 books to his old college and six volumes of his diary. The collection is still in the twelve bookcases of red oak which contained it when it was in the diarist's own home. Magdalene is the only college sited on the left bank of the river.

The Church of the Holy Sepulchre, otherwise known as the Round Church **26**, is one of four such churches in the length and breadth of the country. Some say it has an early connection with the Knights Templar, but there does not, according to scholars, seem to be much evidence that this was so. But it is certainly of Norman origin, and has an interesting history. Unfortunately the church was restored all too thoroughly a century or more ago and in most respects is now a nineteenth-century building. In the West Door not a single old stone remains.

Another of Cambridge's attractive colleges is Jesus. The gateway **27** is the same as that used by the Benedictine nuns of St Rhadegund until the nunnery was suppressed in 1496. The buildings of Jesus College clearly shows its monastic origin. Bishop Alcock of Ely adapted the buildings, and the old monastic walls simply covered by brick still form a large part of the college. The Main Gate Tower pictured here was built by Bishop Alcock. The narrow road to it, flanked by high walls is known as the 'Chimney'. The tower itself looks rather squat, due to the addition in 1718 of an extra storey to the buildings on either side of it. Worth study are the carvings and other detail on this gate tower.

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With its lavishly carved and brightly painted outsize coat of arms over the Gateway, Christ's College **28** seldom escapes the attention of the visitor. Christ's College numbers Milton among its students. He entered in 1625 and was there for seven years. Its famous gardens contain a mulberry tree connected with the poet. The college was first founded in 1436 by William Bingham as God's House but he gave up the site to Henry VI for King's College. It was moved to its present site in 1446 and was enlarged and renamed in 1505 by Lady Margaret Beaufort, mother of Henry VII.

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In the first Court of Christ's College is the Master's Lodge with the Hall adjoining **29**, approached through the eye-catching gateway from St Andrew's Street. This is the original gate of God's House, the foundation out of which Christ's College grew. Downing College Court **30** was completed in 1953. The architect, A. T. Scott, designed it to fit in with the Neo-Grecian style of William Wilkins' early nineteenth-century work. Downing College obtained its charter in 1800 after lengthy litigation. William Wilkins designed three isolated blocks connected by a low screen wall and was thus responsible for the first university campus, even earlier than the University of Virginia. Building has continued right into this century but Downing retains the 'odd man out' feeling, remaining isolated from other colleges. Spacious lawns and the open aspect to the south are attractive.

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The west face of Peterhouse Chapel **31** is in the main court. The view of the main court taken through the loggia and framed in the arch **32** illustrates the charm of this arrangement. Peterhouse, founded in 1284, is Cambridge's oldest college. It is always referred to as Peterhouse, never Peterhouse College. The first college building, the Hall, was built in 1286 with money left by the founder, Hugh de Balsham, Bishop of Ely. The Hall now forms part of the south side of the principal court and was much restored by Sir Giles Gilbert Scott in the last century. The chapel, erected in 1632 by Matthew Wren, uncle of the celebrated architect, is a mixture of Gothic, Renaissance and Classic elements. Originally of brick and later covered by stone, it has been said to have a somewhat theatrical appearance, but it is certainly attractive. The grounds of Peterhouse are a delight, and rank among the loveliest in a city of lovely gardens. Seen from the Fellows garden at Peterhouse **33** is an often admired range of buildings, the Elizabethan Library which was built originally in 1590–95 and extended in 1633. One of the most attractive things about a walk through the colleges in Cambridge is the suddenness with which one comes upon a glimpse of a really old-fashioned garden where bright flowers and lush green lawns stand out in contrast against mellow brick and stone, and where one can linger to enjoy the fragrance in warm corners protected from the east winds. The use of window-boxes to add a gay splash of colour here and there will also attract admiring glances from the visitor. Among the famous names associated with Peterhouse is that of the poet Thomas Gray, a Fellow Commoner there in 1756. Still visible from Trumpington Street is the iron bar he fixed across his window as an attachment-point for a rope ladder in case of fire.

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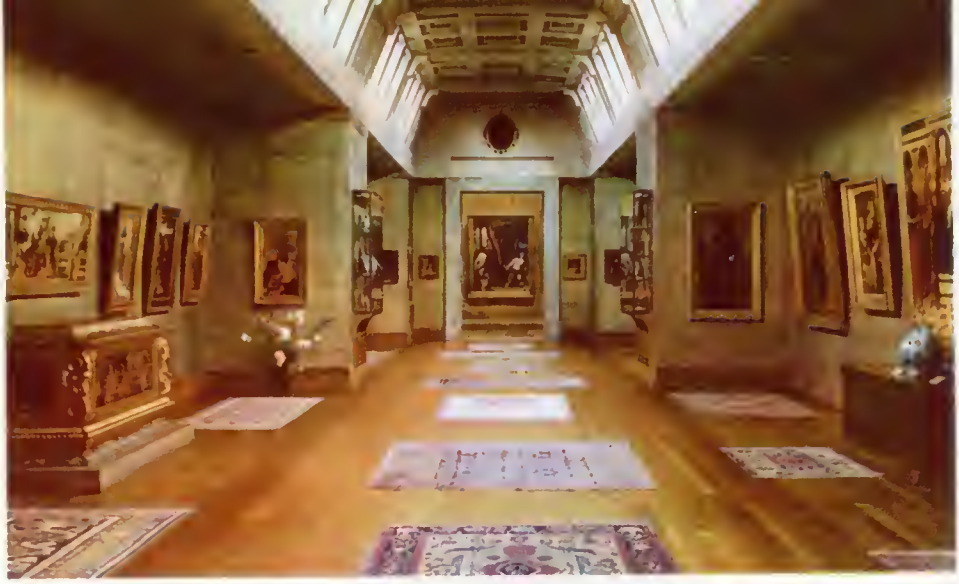
31 33



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Among the country's best museums is undoubtedly the Fitzwilliam **34**. Viscount Fitzwilliam, who died in 1816, left £100,000 in order to have his treasures housed in a building worthy of them. Art collections bequeathed throughout the years include masterpieces by Reynolds, Romney, Gainsborough, Hogarth, and Turner. There are exquisite Dutch and Flemish paintings as well as a fine collection of modern works, not to mention valuable manuscripts and English and Continental pottery. Nothing could better illustrate the point that Cambridge is a thriving and live place, constantly changing and developing, than this picture of Churchill College **35**, Cambridge's newest college. Winston Churchill headed a trust fund launched in 1958 to raise funds to build and endow a new college. Churchill was founded two years later, and gave the opportunity for mid-twentieth-century architecture to make its impact on Cambridge.

35

'I doat on Cambridge', wrote Horace Walpole, spelling 'dote' after the manner of his eighteenth century time. Visitors will undoubtedly echo his words, charmed by the enduring beauty and grace of so many of those colleges and other buildings which comprise the bricks and mortar of the University.

There are exceptions, of course, where restoration has been unfortunate or where inappropriate buildings have been erected. But on the whole, and as a whole, Cambridge architecture is both pleasing to the eye and satisfying to the mind. The best of each age in design and craftsmanship since the thirteenth century has found some expression there. Because the best of one period can always blend with the best of another there is little incongruity evident in Cambridge architecture as a whole.

In their landscaping as well as in their design the colleges and other buildings delight all who look upon them. Their spacious settings are seen at their best in the Backs where so many of the buildings are set well away from the river, with wide expanses of smooth green lawn to lead the eye gently up to them.

But the Cambridge depicted in this book is not, of course, the true essence of the place. That resides in those who people it, and who have peopled it. In its pursuit of learning over some 700 years the University of Cambridge has attracted men with names more famous even than those of the famous colleges to which they belonged. Erasmus came to Queens' (his rooms still exist). Newton was at Trinity, and so also were Lord Macaulay, W. M. Thackeray, Lord Rutherford and—infamous rather than famous—Judge Jeffreys, of the 'Bloody Assize'. Among many other famous Trinity men were King Edward VII and King George VI. Oliver Cromwell, Samuel Pepys, John Milton, Lord Byron, William Wordsworth, Christopher Marlowe—these are but a mere handful of Cambridge names. And it was in the Cavendish Laboratory at Cambridge that Sir John Cockcroft and E. T. S. Walton first split the atom by artificial means. Among today's black-gowned undergraduates, whose progress on bicycles is so familiar a sight in Cambridge streets, are no doubt other men—and women, too—destined for academic, literary, legal or scientific fame.

But Cambridge life is not all work. The inter-'Varsity matches are highlights of the national sporting scene, while numerous societies cater for vastly varied interests. Cambridge is at its gayest in May Week (held in June!) at the end of the academic year when, examinations being over, there are the eight-oared bumping races on the Cam and the light-hearted dance music played at college balls emphasises that the University is indeed 'a fountain of youth'.

Cover pictures: FRONT, *Cambridge composite.* FOLD-IN FRONT, *St. John's College Gateway.* BACK COVER, *King's College*

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